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SUBJECT: LOWER HOUSE ENDORSES MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT REFORM  
BILL

¶1. (SBU) Jordan's lower house of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, endorsed the government's municipal government reform bill. If also approved by the Senate and the King, the bill will lead to municipal elections in early summer. During the debate, Prime Minister Bakhit announced that his government intends to hold municipal elections in the middle of this year.

¶2. (SBU) The bill provides that in all municipalities except Amman, the central government will appoint two council members, while the rest will be elected. (Note: With the exception of Amman (with a 40-member council, most municipal councils range in size from 10 to 24 members. The Aqaba Special Economic Zone and Petra Regional Authorities do not fall under the municipalities law and will continue to have appointed commissioners. End note.) A quota provision guarantees women at least 20 percent of council seats in each locality. Outside Amman, all mayors will be elected. MPs also endorsed a committee amendment that each council appoint -- subject to the Municipalities Minister's confirmation -- the professional municipal manager who will serve alongside each mayor. The original government draft provided for simple appointment by the Minister.

¶3. (SBU) The bill now goes to parliament's upper house, the Senate.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>  
HALE